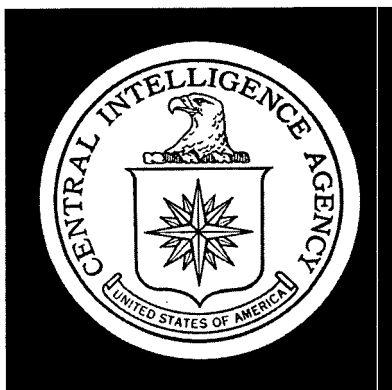


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DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

## MEMORANDUM

### *The Situation in Vietnam*

ARMY and DOS review(s) completed.

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Information as of 1600

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### HIGHLIGHTS

There have been no reports of any adverse reaction to IV Corps commander General Quang's reassignment, which was publicly announced on 19 November. Heavy fighting was reported this week end in the western highlands of Pleiku and Kontum provinces, in coastal Quang Ngai Province, and in the Mekong Delta Province of Kien Hoa.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:  
Heavy fighting was reported during the past week end between allied and Communist forces (Paras. 2-6). MACV has accepted another North Vietnamese Army division in the "possible category" of its enemy order of battle holdings in South Vietnam (Paras. 7-9).

revealed future Viet Cong plans in the III Corps area (Paras. 10-11).

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II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:  
Thus far, there have been no reports of any adverse reaction to IV Corps commander General Quang's reassignment (Para. 1). In the public announcement of the change, Quang was recommended to serve as minister of planning and development, a new cabinet post (Para. 2). General Nguyen Van Manh, 23rd Division commander, was appointed as the new IV Corps commander (Para. 3). Foreign Minister Tran Van Do has complained to US officials of pressures exerted by the military leadership on his ministry (Para. 4).

III. North Vietnamese Military Developments:  
The US Navy destroyers Hamner and Craig continued their patrol of the interdiction zone north of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) during the past week end (Para. 1).

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IV. Other Communist Military Developments:  
There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: DRV  
ambassador to Czechoslovakia, Pham Van Su, has con-  
firmed suspected differences over military tactics  
in the DRV regime (Para. 1).

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Allied forces fought several sharp engagements this week end in widespread sections of South Vietnam.

2. The heaviest action occurred on 18 and 19 November in the highlands of southwestern Kontum and northwestern Pleiku provinces, near the Cambodian border. An estimated force of two Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army companies attacked a South Vietnamese CIDG paramilitary company conducting a reconnaissance patrol west of Plei Djereng Special Forces camp. Two companies from the US 25th Infantry Division participating in Operation PAUL REVERE IV reinforced the beleaguered South Vietnamese unit and experienced heavy contact for more than seven hours. According to interim casualty reports, 166 Communist troops were killed, as against friendly casualties of 21 killed (20 US) and 52 wounded (47 US).

3. No information has been received as to the identity of the enemy unit involved in this action. However, it was probably a subordinate of the 1st North Vietnamese Army (NVA) Division (formerly the 630th Division), major elements of which have been operating in this region since mid-September.

4. In coastal Quang Ngai Province, elements of the 2nd South Korean (ROK) Marine Brigade were attacked on 20 November by an estimated Viet Cong company during the conduct of Operation DRAGON EYE approximately ten miles west-northwest of Quang Ngai city. In the heavy fire fight that ensued, 82 enemy troops were killed, in contrast to ROK losses of nine killed and 16 wounded.

5. The Korean operation is intended to augment a major South Vietnamese search-and-destroy operation--RIO BLANCO/LIEN KET 70--which was launched by six ARVN infantry/ranger battalions and five Vietnamese CIDG companies near Quang Ngai city on 18 November. The coordinated allied offensives are targeted

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against elements of the 2nd North Vietnamese Army (NVA) Division (formerly the 620th Division) which are believed to be operating in this area.

6. Heavy fighting was also reported southwest of Saigon, in the Mekong Delta Province of Kien Hoa, during 18 and 19 November. An allied force of 60 South Vietnamese Popular Forces troops and two US advisers engaged a Communist force of undetermined strength for nearly eight hours some 21 miles south-east of the provincial capital of Truc Giang (Ben Tre). Sixty Viet Cong were reported killed, as compared with friendly casualties of 18 killed (1 US) and ten wounded.

#### Another NVA Division Accepted in Order of Battle

7. MACV has included the headquarters of the 7th NVA Division in the "possible" category of its enemy order of battle. This headquarters, with an estimated strength of 500 men, is believed to be located in Phuoc Long Province. According to information from two prisoners, the 7th Division was activated in May 1966 and consists of the 101st, 141st, and 250th NVA regiments. The total strength of the 7th Division is approximately 4,800 men.

8. The 141st and 250th regiments are currently carried in Phuoc Long Province while the 101st Regiment is in Tay Ninh Province, scene of the current US Operation ATTLEBORO. The 101st Regiment, moreover, is apparently currently operating under the control of the VC 9th Infantry Division. There is some precedent for this subordination since the 101st operated under the control of the 9th Division in Binh Long Province in May and June 1966.

#### Viet Cong Plans in III Corps

X1 [redacted] indicates that future Viet Cong plans for the III Corps area will emphasize: (1) an intensification of guerrilla warfare activity while building up main force units; (2) an extension of present base areas; (3) the strengthening of defenses throughout Viet Cong - controlled areas; and (4) the development of sapper,

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engineer, and special action units. These plans suggest that the Viet Cong intend to strengthen their 5th Division (which operates in Phuoc Tuy, Bien Hoa, Long Khanh, and Binh Tuy provinces) by the addition of a third regiment, and to continue development of the 7th Division.

10. Plans for the remainder of the enemy's so-called "Autumn-Winter Campaign" in southern III Corps reportedly call for stepped-up offensive operations by the 5th Division's 274th Viet Cong Regiment, increased interdiction of waterways in the Rung Sat Special Zone, and a COSVN-directed sabotage/terrorist campaign starting in November and intensifying in December. In Saigon, reports indicate that Viet Cong special operations units have completed the necessary reconnaissance on unidentified US and GVN command, staff, and logistical installations.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. There have been no reports thus far of any adverse reaction to IV Corps commander General Quang's reassignment, which was publicly announced on 19 November along with several other lesser changes in military commands. General Quang is apparently at IV Corps headquarters in Can Tho awaiting a formal change of command ceremony.

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2. According to the announcement made public yesterday, General Quang has been "recommended" to serve as minister of planning and development, a newly created post which will deal mainly with long-term postwar planning and economic development. On 17 November, however, Quang was reported unsure of what post would be assigned to him. His assignment as minister of revolutionary development to oversee agricultural, public works, and certain interior functions was discussed by Directorate members, but later rejected, perhaps because of consistent US support for the current revolutionary development arrangement headed by General Thang.

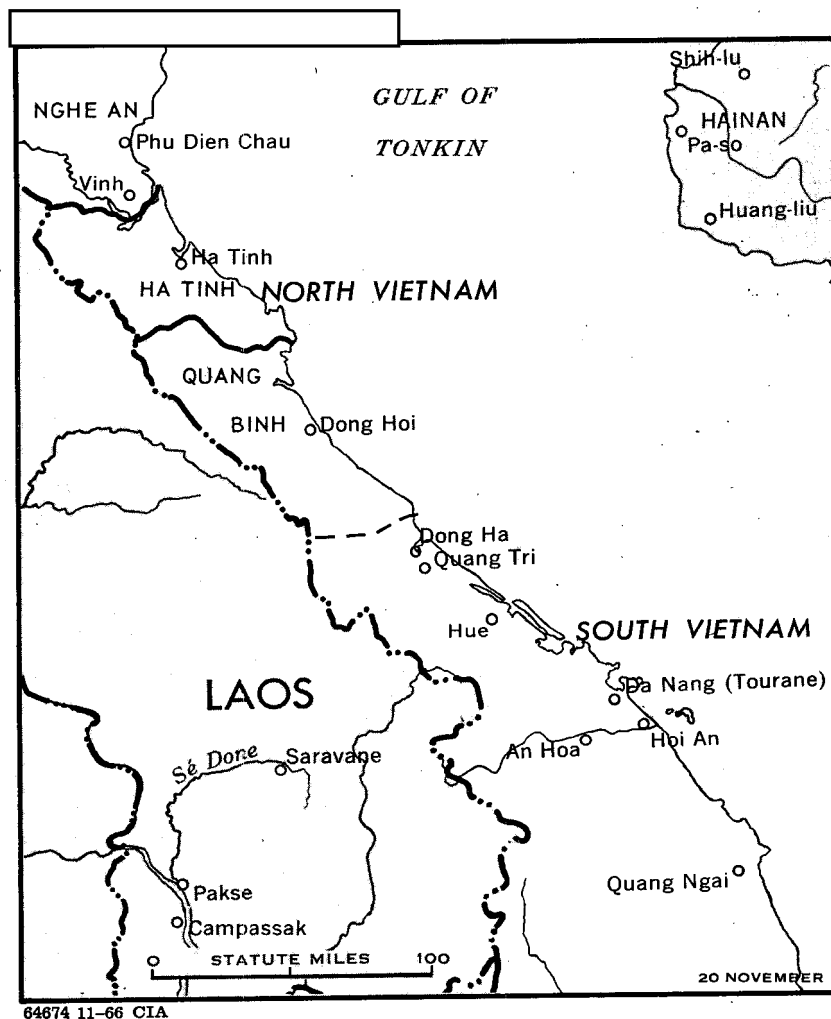
3. General Quang's successor as IV Corps commander is General Nguyen Van Manh, presently 23rd Division commander. Manh, a southerner, apparently was Chief of State Thieu's choice for the IV Corps command. Manh acted briefly last week as II Corps commander while General Vinh Loc was receiving medical treatment in Saigon. Loc has since returned to the II Corps command, although his reassignment to another position was also under consideration.

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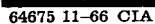
Other notable changes in the military assignments announced yesterday included the appointment of Colonel Truong Quang An as the new 23rd Division commander, and General Tran Van Trung as the army's new director of political warfare.

Foreign Minister Complains of Military Pressure

4. Foreign Minister Tran Van Do has told US officials that the Vietnamese ambassador to the US, Vu Van Thai, has been recalled to Saigon by Premier Ky, and that Thai will be relieved as ambassador by one of Ky's confidants, Bui Diem. Do claimed that this change, which was decided upon without his being consulted, was being made because some of the "generals" do not like Thai. Similar military pressures are also being exerted for the removal of the current ambassadors to Tunisia, Senegal, Japan, and Laos, according to Do, who apparently plans to discuss this issue with Premier Ky. Do also stated that although he did not speak up at the time, he agreed with the complaints recently raised by the dissident southern-oriented cabinet ministers regarding military interference in their departments. There has been previous evidence of friction existing between Do and the military leadership, and Premier Ky was seriously considering replacing Do during the cabinet reorganization in July.

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### III. NORTH VIETNAMESE MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. The US Navy destroyers Hamner and Craig continued their patrol of the interdiction zone immediately north of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ)--Operations TRAFFIC COP and SEA DRAGON--during the past week end. Collectively, the two destroyers took 37 enemy logistics craft under fire, destroying eight and damaging 18. Naval gunfire bombardment was also directed against an enemy radar site near Cap Lay, which resulted in a cessation of radar signals and several secondary fires in the target area. On 19 November, the USS Hamner received heavy fire from at least four enemy shore gun positions located approximately 21 miles northwest of Dong Hoi, in the vicinity of Quang Khe. Both destroyers subsequently returned the fire, destroying two of the shore batteries and damaging two others. Neither destroyer sustained any personnel casualties or physical damage.

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. In a recent interview with US newsman Joseph Kraft in Prague, DRV ambassador to Czechoslovakia, Phan Van Su, provided confirmation of the fact that there have been differences in the DRV regime over the continued validity of some tactical military doctrines developed during the war against the French. An article in the September issue of the DRV journal Hoc Tap asserted that there should not be blind adherence in applying the old doctrines to the present military situation. There was, according to the article, a need now for flexibility in tactical thinking. It appeared that the differences involved members of the DRV politburo, probably including Defense Minister Giap and the commander of Viet Cong operations in the South, Nguyen Chi Thanh. According to Su, the differences have now been resolved.

2. Ambassador Su also declared that North Vietnamese leaders do not regard the recent US election results as a valid indicator of US popular feelings on the war in Vietnam. He argued that Hanoi was only marginally interested in antiwar demonstrations in the US. His assertion, however, contrasts with North Vietnamese propaganda statements that such demonstrations are the harbingers of broad public dissatisfaction with Washington's policy. There is evidence, moreover, that in private statements which the Vietnamese Communists did not think would come to Washington's attention, they have expressed a belief that the US would eventually tire of the war--particularly if US casualties and economic costs remained high.

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